GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2755
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2008
ROLE OF GENETIC FACTOR IN DETERMINING HIV/AIDS
Sen Smt. Minati

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether scientists have discovered key genetic factor in determining HIV/AIDS risk;

(b) if so,the details thereof;

(c) whether Indians are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than many other population groups around the world due to this factor;

(d) if so,the details thereof;and

(e) if so,the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE(SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) Yes sir.A study titled 'Genetic Landscape of the People of India; A Canvas for Disease Gene Exploration' conducted by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India found that the protective gene marker against HIV-1 is virtually absent in India, making its population more at risk.

(b) Scientists at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences,New Delhi studied 200 people with HIV infection and 2000 healthy people over two years for the study.They found that the HLA-B35-Px gene linked to rapid progression from HIV infection to AIDS is two-and-half times more common in Indians than a protective gene called HLA-B35-Py. They also found that the protective gene was not present among Indians.

(c) & (d) Yes sir.The findings of the above study show that the gene linked to rapid progression from HIV infection to AIDS is two-and-a-half times more common in Indians and the protective gene was found to be absent among Indians.However,these findings have to be validated through further studies.

(e) NACO appreciates the fact that more studies are needed to understand host genetics and how it regulates disease progression in HIV/AIDS patients.ICMR is funding a study entitled "Analysis of HLA association among HIV patients co-infected with tuberculosis" to be carried out in North Indian and South Indian patients at PGIMER,Chandigarh and Tuberculosis Research Centre,Chennai respectively.More focused studies shall be initiated to understand the role of genetic factors in influencing risk of HIV/AIDS.